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IN THE  
UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
ART UNIT 3727

Examiner Maerena W. Brevard

Tonya Daree Bauer

CASE 471

SERIAL NO. 10/008,986

FILED November 2, 2001

SUBJECT QUICK-CHANGE WATCHBANDS

THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

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SIR:

REMARKS IN RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

The following remarks are in response to the Office Action mailed November 6, 2002, in connection with the above-identified patent application.

Pending claims 1-3, 8, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,769,290 to Pestana (reference A). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-3 are specifically directed to "A quick-change two-piece watchband for attachment to a watchcasing, comprising: a watchcasing having a first watchcasing pin at a first end thereof and having a second watchcasing pin at a second opposite end thereof; a first piece of said two-piece watchband having a length of a hook and loop fastener material on a bottom

surface thereof proximate an end thereof to be attached to said first end of said watchcasing, the hook and loop fastener material serving to secure said first piece in a desired position after said end of said first piece has been threaded behind said first watchcasing pin; and a second piece of said two-piece watchband having a length of a hook and loop fastener material on a bottom surface thereof proximate an end thereof to be attached to said second end of said watchcasing, the hook and loop fastener material serving to secure said second piece in a desired position after said end of said second piece has been threaded behind said second watchcasing pin." Method claims 8 and 9 are similarly very specifically directed to the method of attachment of the two-piece watchband of claims 1-3.

The above-recited structural features of applicant's claims 1-3 provide a two-piece watchband that may be very quickly and easily attached to and removed from a watch of the wearer's choice without requiring removal and reinstallation of the watchcasing pins, a process that is beyond the capability of the average wearer because it requires special tools and is time consuming, even for a trained jeweler or watch repairer. Applicant's specifically claimed watchband thus allows the wearer to quickly remove one watchband from a chosen watch and to install another, as may be frequently desired in order to provide color and style coordination of a chosen watchband with other items of the wearer's wardrobe.

It is applicant's position that the above-recited features of applicant's claims 1-3, as well as the features of her method claims 8 and 9, are simply not shown or suggested by any of the references of record, taken alone or in any combination.

The applied Pestana reference contains no recognition whatsoever of the desirability of frequently changing watchbands for fashion coordination or other purposes, let alone of applicant's specifically claimed watchband and her method for quickly and easily doing so. As a matter of fact, the wristband taught by Pestana cannot be installed on or removed from a watch without first removing the watchcasing pins, for the reasons set forth in detail hereinbelow. This is precisely the time-consuming, difficult step which is totally eliminated by applicant's claimed invention.

More specifically, strap member 14 of Pestana is formed of a single strip of the Velcro "loop" layer 24, while his other strap member 16 is formed of a single strip of the Velcro "hook" layer 32. Furthermore, the loop only layer 24 is contained on the top surface of strap member 14, which is folded back against itself around a bushing 26 and secured together by means of a layer of adhesive 28. The loop only layer 24 thus becomes the outwardly facing surface of the entire length of strap member 14 and cannot possibly serve to secure it in a desired position, a function that is accomplished primarily by the adhesive layer 28 and, secondarily, by a retainer sleeve 30. After being so assembled, strap member 14 may then be attached to watch 12 only through removal of roll pin 44b (see column 3, lines 20-43 and 57-59 of Pestana). Similarly, the single strip of hook only layer 32 that is formed on the bottom surface of strap member 16 is folded back against itself around a second bushing 34 and is secured tightly around that bushing by means of a retainer sleeve 36. After being so assembled, strap member 16 may then be attached to watch 12 only through removal of roll pin 44a (see column 3, lines 44-59 of Pestana). The assembled strap member 16 thus forms two legs 20a, 20b

with the hook only surfaces 32 thereof facing inwardly toward one another. The watch 12 is then attached to the wearer's wrist by inserting the free end of the strap member 14, having outwardly facing loop only surfaces, between the legs 20a, 20b of strap member 16, each of which has an inwardly facing hook only surface (see column 4, lines 1-12 of Pestana).

This is totally unlike applicant's specifically claimed watchband, in which each of the two pieces thereof includes a length of both hook and loop fastener material, contained on the bottom surface of each piece. Thus, when such length, after having been threaded behind its respective watchcasing pin (without removal of the pin), is folded back upon itself, the mating hook and loop material secures that piece of the two-piece watchband in a desired position. Removal of the watchband is just as easily accomplished by simply separating the previously mated hook and loop material and pulling the free end of each of the two pieces from behind its respective watchcasing pin.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that applicant's pending claims 1-3, 8, and 9 are all clearly patentable over all of the references of record, taken alone or in any combination, and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable action is accordingly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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